U.S.-Flag Fleet Statistics
Fact Sheet

The new framework for presentation of U.S.-flag fleet statistics is intended to show the diversity of the U.S. fleet and the interaction among its segments. Separate figures are presented for vessels over and under 1000 gross tons in order to preserve former time series data. The following description is intended to assist users to fully understand the new presentation framework.

The U.S.-flag fleet statistics are presented in two tables. The first table presents the cargo-carrying U.S.-flag fleet, by area of operation, and the second table presents the fleet of passenger vessels, tugs/towboats and other workboats.

The cargo-carrying vessel table is derived as follows:

Traditional U.S. Vessel Inventory Report numbers can be found in the "Self-propelled >=1,000 Gross Tons" lines of the new framework, with the exception of the integrated tug barges (ITB). ITB's are categorized as non-self-propelled and >=1,000 gross tons. A footnote at the bottom of the table indicates the number of ITB's and the tonnage that is included in each vessel category.

Government-owned vessels continue to be presented under the heading "National Defense Reserve Fleet", although a new grouping (Sealift Vessels) has been added to incorporate commercially operated cargo carrying vessels. Passenger vessels are now shown in the second table (although the number of NDRF passenger vessels is described in a footnote).

The "self-propelled <1,000 Gross Tons" lines reflect vessels obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce of the United States (WCUS) data file and from the U.S. Customs Service vessel movement reports (Forms CF 1400/1401). They are vessels in the fleet on July 1, 1999 that were actually operated during 1999.

Non-self-propelled vessel data is obtained from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' WCUS, U.S. Coast Guard data files and from the U.S. Customs Service vessel movement reports. They are also the vessels in the fleet on July 1, 1999 that were actually operating during 1999.

Assignment of vessels to the < or >= 1000 gross tons categories was based on reported gross (GRT) or net (NRT) registered tonnage. Where tonnage was not reported, the vessel's dimensions were used to estimate the tonnage for assignment purposes. Because of inconsistencies within and between the source data files, additional quality control work was performed to ensure that the reported tonnage was possible within the reported vessel dimensions and that reporting errors were eliminated. This is an area in which additional work will be done in the future, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Great Lakes vessel data, previously reported separately, has been incorporated into the new presentation framework, and expanded to include smaller vessels, both self-propelled and non-self-propelled, drawn from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' WCUS file.

The second table was created to present data on vessels for which cargo-carrying capacity either was not the appropriate measure or did not reflect the true nature of the service provided. These include passenger vessels, tugs/towboats, and other workboats. This inventory data is taken directly from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' WCUS. It is recognized that there are quality issues associated with some of this data which will be the subject of future work as this presentation framework is further developed and refined.

Users wishing to relate data in this presentation (A) to time series created from the U.S. Merchant Marine Data Sheet tables (B) should note the following relationships:

1) Vessels included in (A) as "Foreign Trade, Self-propelled >= 1,000 gross tons" equal the "U.S. Foreign Trade, Foreign-to-Foreign, MSC charter and Laid-up/not trading" categories in (B);

2) Vessels included in (A) as "Domestic Trade, Coastal (including non-contiguous) Self-propelled >= 1,000 gross tons" equal the "Domestic Trade Coastal & Non-Contiguous and Laid-up/MARAD Custody" categories in (B);

3) Vessels included in (A) as "National Defense Reserve Fleet, Ready Reserve Force(RRF)" equal the Active and Inactive "Ready Reserve Force (RRF)" categories in (B);

4) Vessels included in (A) as "National Defense Reserve Fleet, Other Reserve" equal the Active "Other Custody and Other Reserve" and Inactive "Other Reserve (NDRF) and Non-Retention" categories in (B);

5) "Cruise/Passenger vessels previously included in (B) are now included in the second table of the new presentation, but their number is indicated in a footnote in (A).

Questions regarding the structure or content of this new presentation framework for the U.S. fleet should be addressed to the Office of Statistical and Economic Analysis (Tel: 202/366-2267; FAX: 202/366-8886; e-mail data@marad.dot.gov).